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News Release

FORMER LATIN KING GANG MEMBER SENTENCED TO 149 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR RE-ENTRY AFTER DEPORTATION

8 gang members arrested in Atlanta and North Carolina during gang enforcement operation

ATLANTA – A 34-year-old former member of the Latin Kings gang was sentenced here Oct. 13th to 149 months in prison and three years of supervised release after being convicted on Aug. 3rd for re-entering the United States after having been deported in violation of Title 8 U.S.C. Section 1326 and for violating the terms of his supervised release.

Lorenzo Sotelo-Camacho, a national of Mexico, received 125 months for the re-entry conviction and 24 months for the violation of his release.

Sotelo-Camacho was arrested by officers of the Dekalb County Sheriff's Office on Dec. 19, 2004 on battery and obstruction of justice charges. ICE special agents subsequently charged Sotelo-Camacho for re-entering the country again after having been deported.

Sotelo-Camacho has an extensive criminal history including convictions for criminal trespass, battery, forgery, theft by receiving and burglary. He was deported from the United States in 2003 after completing his sentence for a 1999 re-entry after deportation conviction.

"Those who seek to illegally re-enter the United States should think twice," said Ken Smith, special agent-in-charge of the Atlanta office. "The sentence of Sotelo-Camacho sends the clear message that you will be found, arrested and charged for violating U.S. laws."

Sotelo-Camacho applied for immigration relief in 1989. An immigration judge subsequently found him ineligible for any form of relief and ordered him removed from the country.

ICE has filed a detainer against Sotelo-Camacho, meaning that, upon the completion of his criminal sentence, he will be turned over to ICE custody for removal from the country.

Also on Monday ICE agents here and in Charlotte, North Carolina arrested eight gang members linked to the SUR-13 gang and 18th Street gang. All of those arrested are nationals of Mexico. Among them was Miguel Angel Salas-Ruiz, who was found in possession of a Maverick Model 88, 12-gauge shotgun. Six of the eight gang members were arrested in Charlotte, while two were arrested in Atlanta.

All of those arrested with the exception of Salas-Ruiz are in ICE custody awaiting the outcome of their cases. Salas-Ruiz is detained at the Mecklenburg County jail awaiting the outcome of his criminal case. The Huntersville Police Department, Forsyth County Sheriff's Office, Cumming Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Gang Task Force assisted with the arrests.

These are the latest actions under "Operation Community Shield," an ICE anti-gang initiative that targets members of violent street gangs. Since Operation Community Shield's launch in February 2005, ICE agents have worked with their federal, state and local counterparts to arrest more than 1,390 gang members nationwide.

ICE kicked off Operation Community Shield in February by specifically targeting MS-13, which is one of the most violent street gangs in the country. ICE expanded the initiative in May to include all criminal street gangs and prison gangs with foreign-born members. With the launch of this second phase, ICE's Operation Community Shield aims to ensure that gang members have no safe haven in our nation's communities. To date, ICE has arrested more than 1,390 gang members under this national initiative.

ICE uses its broad immigration authorities (both criminal and administrative) against gang members, as well as its customs authorities in targeting gang-related narcotics smuggling, money laundering, and in seeking the forfeiture of illegally derived assets.

Operation Community Shield involves strong partnerships and cooperation with existing federal, state, and local anti-gang efforts. Such partnerships are essential to the success of the initiative and to ensure officer safety during operations.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jane W. Swift for the Northern District of Georgia handled the prosecution of the Sotelo-Camacho case.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.